UNITED
NATIONS

CRC

Convention on the
Rights of the Child

Distr.
GENERAL

CRC/C/SR.815
26 September 2002

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Thirty-first session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 815th MEETING

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva,
on Monday, 23 September 2002, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. DOEK

CONTENTS

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (continued)

Initial report of Seychelles

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the public meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.02-44597 (E) 250902 260902

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 4) (continued)

Initial report of Seychelles (CRC/C/3/Add.64; CRC/C/Q/SEY/1; written replies of the Government of Seychelles to the questions in the list of issues (document without a symbol distributed in the meeting room in English only))

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Seychelles took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. HOAREAU (Seychelles) said that the initial report of Seychelles (CRC/C/3/Add.64) presented the findings of a review of the implementation of the Convention in her country from its ratification in 1990 up to 1995. The result of broad consultation on a national level involving all the agencies concerned (both governmental and non-governmental) as well as parents and children, the report was a comprehensive and honest analysis of the state of Seychellois children. It highlighted the achievements that had been made as well as the legal inconsistencies, and made recommendations as to their resolution. Given that the report dated back to 1995, many of those recommendations had been implemented or were in the process of being implemented.

3. Although ratification of the Convention had not required any immediate amendment to legislation for the purposes of implementation, the Children's Act had been under review and a number of changes had been made since 1991, in line with the principles of the Convention. The report discussed general measures and principles of implementation, including measures to harmonize domestic law and policy with the Convention's provisions, national mechanisms for coordinating policies and for monitoring implementation of the Convention, measures to promote public awareness of the Convention and measures to circulate the report. It presented a review of implementation in five main areas, namely civil rights and freedoms, family environment and alternative care, health and welfare, education, leisure and cultural activities and special protection measures.

4. The CHAIRPERSON invited the members of the Committee to put questions to the delegation concerning general measures of implementation, the definition of the child and general principles.

5. Ms. OUEDRAOGO said that the report was easy to read and had been prepared in accordance with the Committee's guidelines. The realistic and coherent recommendations made at the end of each chapter were particularly encouraging, revealing that the State party had an objective approach and an understanding of the problems that it faced. However, the lack of disaggregated statistical data made it difficult to assess the real situation. She urged the State party to meet its reporting obligations to other treaty bodies, as the other conventions also had an impact on children. She expressed disappointment that Seychelles had not yet ratified the Hague Conventions - in particular the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption - and asked whether there were any particular reasons for that shortcoming.

6. Further information should be provided about the harmonization of national law and policy with the provisions of the Convention. It was unclear whether the international instruments ratified by the State party were automatically applicable. The reporting State should indicate whether the independent ombudsman's office provided for in the Constitution had been created and whether the ombudsman was empowered to investigate complaints regarding the violation of the rights of the child. She would also like to know whether the revised Children's Act, which had been under review in 1995, had been adopted, and whether it had ever been invoked before the courts.

7. It would be interesting to know whether any public debates had been organized to give the general public - including children - the opportunity to air views about the Convention. The State party should indicate whether the text of the Convention had been published in the official journal.

8. The State party had no national mechanism as such for monitoring the implementation of the Convention and the report revealed that greater efforts needed to be made to coordinate activities in that field. It would be useful to know whether any progress had been made in implementing the concluding remarks and recommendations contained in the report, at both national and local levels.

9. Further details should be provided about the role of the National Council for Children, the National Commission for Child Protection and the ad hoc committee for child protection and about how the three bodies coordinated their activities. It would also be interesting to know whether there was a national network of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). It was unclear whether NGOs had played an active role in the preparation of the report. It was equally unclear whether teaching on the provisions of the Convention was provided in schools and whether professionals received any training in that field. The written replies of the Government to the questions in the list of issues were too brief; in particular, the questions on general measures of implementation merited closer attention.

10. It was disappointing to note that the minimum age for marriage was lower for girls than for boys. It would be interesting to know whether any steps had been taken to remedy the situation. She expressed concern that the minimum age of criminal responsibility was fixed at 12 years; further information should be provided about the applicability of that provision, given that according to some sources, children under the age of 12 were sometimes held in custody.

11. While the Constitution promoted non-discrimination, it did not specify the types of discrimination that were prohibited, making it difficult to know whether the forms of discrimination mentioned in the Convention were all taken into account. Further information should be provided about discrimination against girls in conflict with the law, as girls seemed to receive harsher treatment than boys in the same situation.

12. The report revealed that traditional attitudes both within and outside the family continued to exclude children from expressing their views, including at legal level. It would be interesting to know whether any progress had been made in implementing the recommendations made by the State party in that regard.

13. She expressed concern that no complaints mechanism was available to children who wished to report a violation of their rights. The State party should indicate what options were open to children who suffered from violations of their rights at home or in society. Lastly, she asked the reporting State to outline the progress made since the introduction in 1995 of the plan of action to promote child survival and development.

14. Ms. AL-THANI said she had enjoyed reading the report and had particularly welcomed the State party's capacity to self-criticize and draw its own conclusions and recommendations. As the report had been drafted almost seven years previously, the delegation should focus on providing updated information on the implementation of those recommendations. When preparing the report, the Government had become aware that children and young people had very limited knowledge of the Convention. Consequently, efforts had been made to hold a series of workshops to raise young people's awareness of it. However, such efforts were, in her view, unsystematic and further information should be provided about any concrete steps that had been taken to educate children about their rights.

15. She would welcome further information about the functions of the ombudsman provided for in the Constitution. The State party should indicate whether the ombudsman was able to investigate complaints from children. The reporting State should also clarify the role of the National Council for Children, which was described in the report as a semi-autonomous organization.

16. Seychelles was unusual in that most babies were born out of wedlock. The percentage of teenage pregnancies was high. The fact that abortion was illegal except in certain circumstances threatened the right to life, survival and development, as many teenage girls chose to have illegal - and therefore dangerous - abortions. The State party should indicate under which circumstances abortion was allowed.

17. Mr. CITARELLA said his primary concern was that the information provided in the report was outdated. It was unclear whether the report covered only the period up until 1995, as some references were made to 1997. More recent information should be provided in addition to the statistics given in the written replies. Further information should also be provided about the status of the Convention in domestic legislation. The State party should indicate whether the Constitution still prevailed over all other laws. It would also be interesting to know whether any new legislation had been introduced to promote implementation of the Convention. The Children's Act was outdated and the State party should provide more detailed information of the steps taken to review it.

18. Traditionally, the policy in Seychelles was to protect children rather than to give them rights, which meant that the rights of parents were more important than the rights of children; it would be interesting to know whether the general attitude of civil society had changed since ratification of the Convention. The definition of the child provided in paragraph 25 of the report needed clarification; what was meant by "a person under 18 years of age and including a young person"? The State party should explain why certain children under the age of 14 had been given a suspended sentence with a probation order, whereas according to the report no child under the age of 14 could be sent to prison.

19. Ms. TIGERSTEDT-TÄHTELÄ said she would like to know what steps had been taken to renew the system used to monitor and evaluate implementation of the Convention. The report revealed that the main factor preventing fulfilment of enjoyment of the rights under the Convention was a lack of resources, both material and human, and that the steady rise in the young population had to be accompanied by a corresponding increase in resources for its development. It was therefore disappointing that no information had been provided about the resources used for the implementation of the Convention and that the State party had not indicated the proportion of the national budget allocated to social needs, in particular education. Under article 4 of the Convention, States parties were obliged to undertake measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the Convention to the maximum extent of their available resources. In order to be able to compete with other sectors of the budget, child rights should be made a priority on the political agenda. Information also needed to be provided about the scope, nature and quality of multinational cooperation and whether any priorities had been set with regard to implementing the rights of the child.

20. Ms. SARDENBERG commended the Government for including remarks and recommendations in each section of its report, thus providing valuable information on linkages with national structures. The report had been drawn up, after some delay, under the auspices of the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. How did that Ministry ensure a comprehensive approach and holistic implementation of the rights of the child? While Seychelles had a very good record of ratification of human rights instruments, the report on the implementation of the rights of the child, which had been submitted with a delay of nearly 10 years, was among the first to be sent by the State party to a treaty body. What accounted for the difficulties in fulfilling reporting obligations?

21. Certain NGOs had pointed to an urgent need for a reliable data-collection system, and had highlighted a lack of data disaggregated by gender. Data collection was of great importance in drawing up coherent policies addressing the needs of different groups of children.

22. There were reportedly gaps between the adoption of legislation and practical implementation of the rights of the child. What steps was the Government taking to address those issues and the administrative problems encountered in the implementation of the Convention? Had the Convention been translated into Creole? Did the Government have any plans to disseminate the report?

23. In June 2000 a Committee had reportedly been established with a view to harmonizing laws pertaining to a number of issues, including gender equality, access to contraceptives, employment, marriage and HIV/AIDS. It had drawn up a report, which had been submitted to the National Commission for Child Protection. What follow-up had been given to the report?

24. The Committee would like to know whether there was any discrimination against the children of foreign workers or against girls. What steps had the Government taken to ensure that children had the right to be heard? What was the mandate of the youth council set up under the Ministry of Education? Did the State party have any plans to establish a children's parliament?

25. Mr. AL-SHEDDI underscored the importance of having a single coordinating body to ensure the implementation of the Convention. It was unclear whether the National Council for Children was a body under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment or a separate entity. Did the National Council for Children include representatives from other ministries, such as those responsible for health or education? The delegation should explain whether the National Council for Children had its own budget and elaborated its own programmes, and how it coordinated its work with governmental services and NGOs.

26. In the report it was unclear whether the National Programme of Action for Children had been solely an initiative of the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs or had also involved other government ministries. Did the private sector play a role in the provision of education, health or other services for children? Lastly, he asked whether there were any school programmes aimed at enhancing the ability of children to express their views in the family.

27. Ms. KARP said that she had hoped that the written replies and presentation by the delegation would provide more of a follow-up to the recommendations issued by the State party in the report.

28. As in many Caribbean countries, over 45 per cent of households in Seychelles were apparently single-parent homes, and presumably the great majority were headed by women. What accounted for that situation, and how did the Government target its policies to meet the needs of such families? The Government had set up family courts, the primary objective being to enforce the collection of maintenance payments. Such courts had reportedly been criticized, and their functions had been the subject of a public and parliamentary debate. Could the delegation provide more information in that regard?

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.15 a.m.

29. Ms. LLOYD (Seychelles) said that the National Commission for Child Protection had replaced the Child Protection Committee and the ad hoc committee for child protection mentioned in the report; it included the participation of NGOs as well as representatives of the police force, educators, health services, social services, industries, the judiciary and the Ministry of Justice. The National Commission met monthly and advised the Government on all policies related to child protection. There had been plans to include a research centre and to compile a national database, but the resources available had been limited. Only very recently had a secretary been appointed.

30. For the practical implementation of children's rights and effective child protection, the Government regularly set up inter-agency, multidisciplinary teams to deal with specific cases. There were established procedures and rules for such cooperation.

31. The National Council for Children, which had once been a government body, had been given the status of a semi-autonomous NGO in the early 1990s. Its Chairperson had powers akin to those of an ombudsman for children. Part of its budget came from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and other sources of financing included sponsors and fund-raising activities. Its Executive Committee included representatives of the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment, Health and Education, as well as the private sector. The tasks of the National

Council for Children included advocating for children, lobbying for policy change and developing therapeutic services for victims of child abuse and children at risk. The staff had at various times included a play therapist, a psychotherapist, a counsellor and a psychologist.

32. Mr. AL-SHEDDI asked what influence the National Council for Children had with the various government ministries other than the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

33. Ms. TIGERSTEDT-TÄHTELÄ asked the delegation to comment on the fact that the National Council for Children apparently fulfilled two roles: that of an advocator for children's rights, and that of a service provider.

34. Ms. KARP expressed surprise that only one psychological professional was employed by the National Council for Children. Was the Government unduly delegating its responsibility so that it would not have to hire such professionals?

35. Ms. LLOYD (Seychelles) said that while the National Council for Children had a great deal of authority and importance, it did not assume any governmental responsibility. It had its own statutes, and primarily lobbied in the interests of children. Any governmental responsibility for children's rights was shouldered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, which had recently changed its name to reflect the fact that it gave more emphasis to its coverage of social affairs.

36. In order to avoid duplication and save resources, and because of the small size of the country, the National Council for Children had been assigned a dual role as an advocate of children's rights and as a service provider. It had proven very difficult to find and maintain professional staff to provide psychological services. There had been much staff turnover, including foreign specialists, and the position required a special sensitivity to local culture.

37. There was indeed a lack of reliable information on social indicators. For the collection and processing of data, a social development division had recently been established within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. Part of the division's mandate was to review and improve data collection. She expressed the hope that the information provided by the Government in the next report would be more complete.

38. Ms. SARDENBERG said that the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) could assist the State party by providing technical assistance to improve data collection and processing techniques.

39. Mr. CITARELLA, noting that Seychelles comprised over 100 islands, asked whether there were any cultural, economic or social disparities among the populations of the various islands. Was the legislation applied equally throughout the country?

40. Ms. LLOYD said that only four or five islands were permanently inhabited and had populations of children, and that there were no such disparities or discrimination.

41. It was true that there were many single-parent households, and as in many Caribbean countries errant fathers were a social problem. However, the number of such households was not as high as 45 per cent. That figure corresponded instead to the number of households that were headed by women, i.e., those in which a woman had answered the census takers' questions. That did not necessarily mean that all such households had single-parent families.

42. Ms. GONTIER (Seychelles) said that the Ministry of Education employed child psychiatrists and trained social workers. Other organizations had their own psychiatrists, and there was a system of cooperation among all bodies with regard to the work of psychiatrists and trained child welfare workers. The matter of the Hague Convention was currently being considered by the National Commission for Child Protection, as was accession to the Optional Protocols on the involvement of children in armed conflicts and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The text of the Convention was being translated into Creole for dissemination throughout the schools on the three main islands. It had also been the subject of a children's conference held in June 2000, and its text had been submitted first to the Cabinet and then to Parliament before being disseminated throughout the country. Measures to implement it had included a review of the Children's Act and the setting up of the Family Tribunal. In addition, the social services had established a special legal counsel empowered to bring cases before the courts.

43. In general, the procedure of harmonizing laws involved looking into existing disparities, such as discrimination in eligibility for marriage, and at legislation in general as it related to the child. In that connection, a working group had recommended a number of legislative amendments with a view to approval by the National Commission for Child Protection. Although the Convention did not form part of the school curriculum, it was included in the syllabus in the context of personal and social education.

44. The Republic of Seychelles did have an Ombudsman. It had been decided, however, to mandate the National Commission for Child Protection as the office of ombudsman for children's affairs, although the task had not yet been taken up due to lack of resources. In Seychelles, a child was defined as any person under 18 years of age. The term "young persons" had been used because that term existed in law to mean persons aged 14 to 18 years. The minimum age of criminal responsibility, under the Penal Code, was 12 years, but persons aged between 8 and 12 years could be brought before the courts, depending on a number of factors assessed by the Attorney-General's Office. Two under-18s were currently serving prison sentences for murder convictions, but the general practice was to consider all possible alternatives before passing sentences of such severity. The Juvenile Court or the Family Tribunal could also send to the Youth Residential Treatment Centre under-18s deemed in need of protection or compulsory care.

45. With regard to termination of pregnancy, a board had been set up to which all applications must be submitted; approval had to be on medical grounds. But the incidence of illegal abortion remained a matter of serious concern.

46. With regard to developments since preparation of the 1995 report, one serious shortcoming was that much information had not been documented. Progress had been made in that regard, however, in drawing up a report for the period 1995-2000 on the Convention's

implementation. Reports were already available on the National Programme of Action, a 1999 review of child protection services and a review of the Family Tribunal. In addition, a master register of child abuse cases had been established and was kept by the social services. Work was being carried out in collaboration with UNICEF with regard to a children's parliament, but no details were yet available.

47. There were no indications of any discrimination against children of foreign workers. As for girls being discriminated against or disadvantaged, a recent study by the Association of Professional Women had revealed that girls achieved better results in their studies than boys.

48. Efforts were being made, through career guidance programmes and elsewhere, to broaden the aims of girls and encourage them to enter the professions and other careers previously regarded as the domain of men.

49. THE CHAIRPERSON invited the delegation to reply to questions raised relating to financial and budgetary matters, including international support.

50. Ms. LLOYD (Seychelles) said budget figures had been prepared relating to various activities such as support for disabled children. With regard to the recommendation for UNICEF assistance, that body had no programme for Seychelles, which, although a small nation, was seemingly deemed a middle-income country. Bilateral assistance agreements existed, but it was not possible to relate particular donor countries to specific projects. Since the Convention's ratification, all children's projects submitted to the Cabinet had been approved, but funding them was a problem.

51. Although some traditional views prevailed, stereotyping was certainly on the wane. Modern communications had made young people increasingly aware of the world around them, and the situation had evolved considerably since preparation of the previous report. For example, children were well aware of helplines and other facilities at their disposal, and made full use of them. Achieving a satisfactory balance with parental responsibility was the current problem.

52. THE CHAIRPERSON asked when the National Commission for Child Protection could be expected to take up the task of ombudsman for children's affairs and, in general, how children would be able to lodge complaints.

53. Ms. SARDENBERG asked whether Seychelles had participated in the special session on children and whether it had any plans to implement the outcome document. She also wished to know whether the Youth Council had participated in the special session.

54. Ms. LLOYD (Seychelles) said that no specific figures relating to children were available from the Ombudsman. The National Council for Children, however, was the organization that children were most likely to approach; they understood that organization and its helplines, and its chairperson was widely known and respected. The social service, too, had helplines, and there were child protection officers in the schools. Children were fully aware of all those facilities and of the explicit manual of procedure. Replying to a question by Ms. Karp, she said that complaints lodged by children generally related to some form of abuse.

55. Ms. HOAREAU (Seychelles) said that all schools had trained counsellors who were not only sympathetic to children but followed established procedures with regard to all complaints.

56. Ms. TIGERSTEDT-TÄHTELÄ, referring to the matter of resources, asked whether Seychelles had conducted any inquiries into the effect and quality of services.

57. Ms. LLOYD (Seychelles) said that a comprehensive review of resources was in progress, but no complete study of impacts was yet available.

58. Ms. HOAREAU (Seychelles) said that the Youth Council had proved to be an invaluable forum in which young persons could discuss problems, obtain advice and information and be made aware of current problems such as AIDS. It was a place where they themselves could talk openly and make a contribution. Replying to a question by Ms. Sardenberg, she said that the Youth Council was a part of the Ministry of Education, now renamed the Ministry of Education and Youth.

59. Ms. LLOYD (Seychelles) said that the National Council for Child Protection, but no government representatives, had attended the special session, but the Government and the NCCP had since been working together on follow-up measures.

60. Ms. KARP said that, while appreciating the progress made in Seychelles, she was concerned that the Government's lack of participation in the special session and the fact that the current report had been prepared by a special consultant might give the impression that the Government itself was not the focal point for issues relating to children; responsibility for implementing the Convention rested, after all, with Governments.

61. Ms. SARDENBERG said she was puzzled about the reference to lack of resources in Seychelles. Since per capita GDP, some $7,500, seemed rather high. she would like to know more about income distribution and asked whether there was a progressive taxation system. She understood that there was no UNDP or UNICEF presence in the country, and had the impression that there was very little contact with any United Nations agencies. Perhaps an effort could be made, through the Office of the High Commissioner, to promote the involvement of such agencies and of relevant international non-governmental organizations.

62. Ms. LLOYD (Seychelles) said that the Government had assumed the role of coordinator in the preparation of the report. Although it had entrusted the drafting process to a consultant, it had contributed its own expertise and held extensive consultations with NGOs before submitting the final draft for cabinet approval. It did not consider the policy of working closely with independent partners to be an abdication of responsibility.

63. Although there was no income tax, all employers and employees contributed to a social security fund, which was subsequently used to redistribute income and alleviate poverty.

64. Mr. CITARELLA said he failed to understand why it had taken until 2001 to submit an initial report that dealt with the period 1990 to 1995.

65. Ms. LLOYD (Seychelles) said that, owing to poor awareness of the Convention, the decision to draft the report had not been taken until 1996. Even with the help of funding from UNICEF, it had been a difficult task to collect data for the period 1990 to 1995. Once the report had been submitted in 1999, it had taken a further two years to gain cabinet approval.

66. The CHAIRPERSON invited members of the Committee to put questions to the delegation concerning civil rights and freedoms, family environment and alternative care and basic health and welfare.

67. Ms. OUEDRAOGO said that a number of problems had been highlighted in the report concerning preservation of the child's identity, such as the fact that a child born out of wedlock did not have the right to know the identity of his or her natural father. It would be useful to hear whether any reforms had been introduced in that regard. She enquired whether steps had been taken to protect children from exposure to indecent material or information. For instance, the delegation should explain whether a committee had been set up to examine the censorship of violent films. She asked whether the Government had responded to complaints made by children concerning restrictions on the freedom of peaceful assembly and the failure to guarantee the right to private correspondence. Some parties had expressed fears that the recognition of children's rights might undermine the role of parents. She wanted to know whether successful efforts had been made to change such attitudes.

68. Regrettably, at the time of drafting of the initial report, corporal punishment had yet to be prohibited in schools and the law had still contained potentially misleading provisions on the use of reasonable chastisement She would appreciate details of any legislative reform in that area. The delegation should also elaborate on the programmes designed to strengthen families as the basic unit of society. The Children's Act of 1982 had failed to address the question of parental responsibility. She asked for information concerning the proposed revision of the Act to set out the statutory obligations of parenthood.

69. It would be interesting to learn whether the Government had taken follow-up measures to implement the recommendations made in the report concerning the problems affecting children's homes. In cases of child abuse, she would like to know whether the people dealing with complaints had been trained to avoid causing the child further distress during the relevant investigation.

70. Mr. CITARELLA expressed concern regarding the alleged opening of children's correspondence, and asked who was responsible for such activities: parents, or public officials acting on the grounds of public security. He wanted to know whether the Children's Act had been reformed with a view to establishing a more suitable balance between parental and children's rights. Drawing attention to the restriction on the child's right to choose his or her religion, as well as the failure to provide children with the right to be heard during divorce proceedings, he asked for details of the government response to those problems.

71. Ms. AL-THANI said she was concerned by the statement in the report that residential care was preferable to placing children in foster homes. Since most experts would agree that the contrary was usually true, she asked whether there were specific reasons for the poor record of foster care.

72. Welcoming the progress made in lowering mortality rates, she said that considerable work remained to be done to improve health care in the neonatal period. Furthermore, a number of health problems persisted, including an increased incidence of HIV/AIDS, owing to the high teenage pregnancy rate. She wanted to know whether steps had been taken to remove the ban on the sale of contraceptives to children aged under 16 years. Figures showed that over half of child deaths occurred as a result of poisonings and road accidents. The delegation should explain whether there were specific plans to address that problem.

73. The failure to promote breastfeeding had led to nutritional deficiencies in small children, which in turn increased the likelihood of lifelong obesity. She enquired whether efforts had been made over the past seven years to change cultural habits and, in particular, to encourage longer periods of maternity leave and enhance alternative care in the workplace. Details should also be given of government plans to develop a proper policy for integrating disabled children into society.

74. Ms. TIGERSTEDT-TÄHTELÄ, referring to an NGO report containing allegations of appalling conditions in the Youth Regional Treatment Centre (YRTC), said it was hard to understand the Government's failure to reform the system for dealing with children unable to live with their families. In view of the fact that only 22 children had been looked after in the YRTC, she asked whether greater efforts had been made to find places for those children in foster care.

75. Ms. SARDENBERG said that the report contained contradictory messages concerning the placement of children. On the one hand, there were useful recommendations on foster families and, on the other, a surprising reliance on institutional care. With regard to adoption, she asked whether there were plans to amend legislation prohibiting adopted children from discovering the names of their biological parents before reaching the age of 18 years.

76. The CHAIRPERSON said that, according to the report, the price of sending children to day nurseries was too high for poor families and single mothers. He wanted to know what the Government had done to alter that situation.

77. Ms. KARP said she would welcome information relating to the number of children suffering from domestic violence, as well as the number of single mothers. She expressed concern that children were not even consulted before being placed either in foster or institutional care. She asked whether, in such cases, enough research was done into the background of each child before deciding on the best course of action.

The meeting rose at 1.00 p.m.